First Methodist Church
1858-1958

Centennial Sunday
First Methodist Church

REV. WILLIAM JONES, Pastor

Morning Worship
November 16, 1958
10:45 A. M.

1858-1958

THE CENTENNIAL SERVICE OF WORSHIP

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH
FAIRBURY, ILLINOIS

NOVEMBER 16, 1958

The Hymn Meditation
The Sanctus . . . . . Chancel Choir
The Organ Prelude, "Fanfare" . . . . Lemmens
MRS. JAMES GOULD, Organist
*The Hymn, "My Faith Looks Up To Thee" . . . Page 213
*The Affirmation of Faith

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day He arose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of the saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Reading of the Scriptures . . . . Ephesians 6:10-20
The Silent Period of Meditation
Special Music, "Calvary" . . . . Rodney
STANLEY WEEKS, Soloist

The Pastoral Prayer
The Choral Response
The Anthem, "Think of These Things" . . . Mueller
THE CHANCEL CHOIR, Mrs. E. F. Dickey, Directing

The Service of Baptism
*The Responsive Reading, "Church Anniversary" Page 642
*The Gloria Patri
The Offertory Prayer
The Offertory, "O God, Thou Faithful God" . . . Karg-Elert
The Offertory Response
*The Hymn, "God of Our Fathers" . . . . Page 496
The Sermon . . . . Dr. William W. Bennett
District Superintendent, Bloomington District
*The Service of Re-Consecration
*The Doxology
*The Benediction
*The Choral Amen
The Postlude, "O Fairest Church of Christ" . . . Sachs

*Indicates the congregation will stand

ENTER TO WORSHIP — DEPART TO SERVE

THE CENTENNIAL SERVICE OF RE-CONSECRATION

WILLIAM C. JONES, Minister

MINISTER: Desiring to recognize our indebtedness to God, whose beneficent grace and providence have guided this church and its people through one hundred years of service and humbled by the presence of the God of our fathers, we do stand to re-dedicate this church and ourselves to the glory of God, to the service of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the honor of the Holy Spirit,

PEOPLE: For one hundred years of the ministry of thy word, for wise and earnest preaching of thy precepts and the way that leads to life eternal; and for the faithful ministers who have served as pastors,

MINISTER: For one hundred years of fellowship and brotherly love—and the favor of God in the growth and service of this church and for God's blessing upon the means of grace here faithfully used,

PEOPLE: For one hundred years of thy help in promoting generously the missionary enterprises at home and abroad and for the helpful encouragement of the causes of Christian education and evangelism,

MINISTER: For one hundred years of proclaiming the sanctity of the home and the family, for the instruction of thy people in high and holy things, for the building of Christian character and the teaching of honor, reverence and self control,

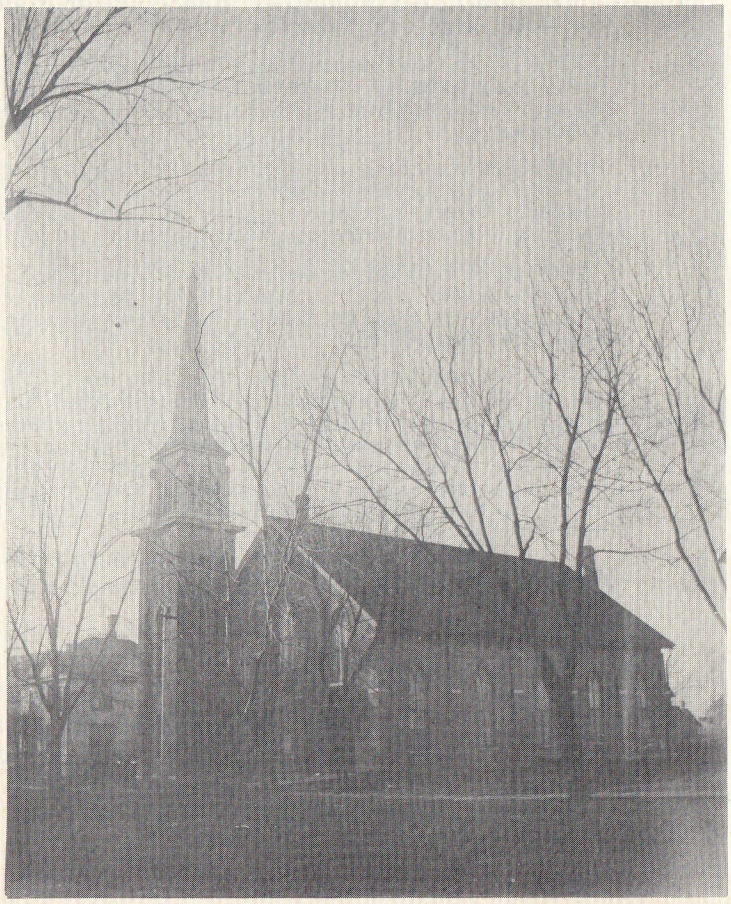
PEOPLE: In humble gratitude to all who have loved and served this church and have gone from us to join the church triumphant; we render unto thee, the God of our fathers, our deep gratitude, and ardent thanksgiving.

MINISTER AND PEOPLE: Now, therefore, we, the members and friends of this congregation, in the presence of God, conscious that we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, grateful for each rich inheritance, and sensible of the sacrifice of our fathers, do humbly re-dedicate ourselves, this church and all its appointments, and the powers within us, to the glory of God and to the service of him, who is the head of the church, even Jesus Christ, our Lord.

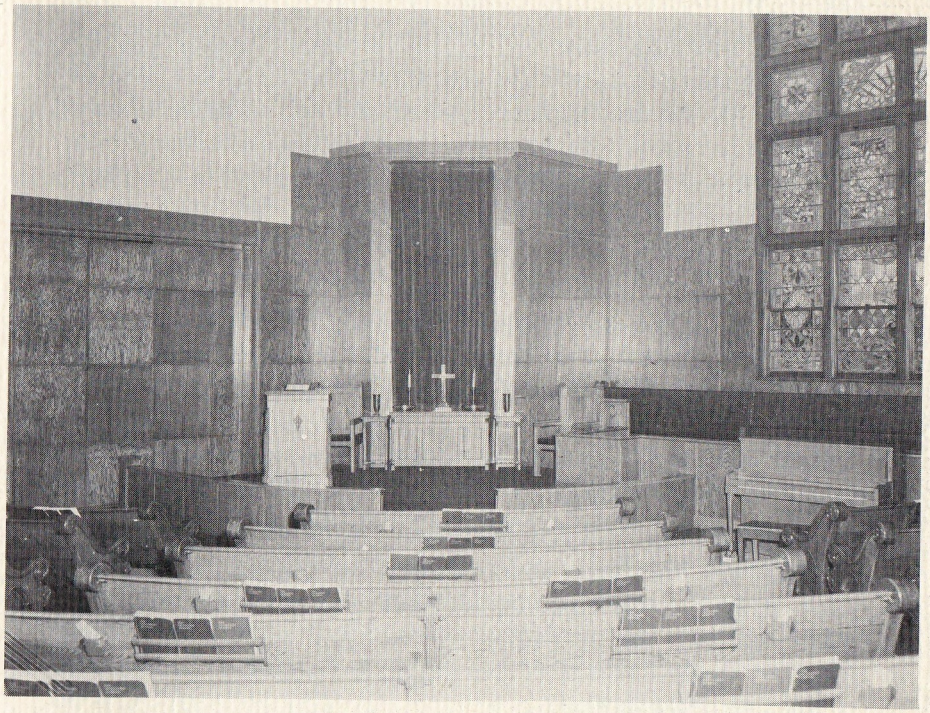
PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Cornerstone Laid
October 10, 1876

Destroyed by tornado
six months later



New Church
dedicated
January 20, 1878.
Later razed
to build
present
structure.



SANCTUARY — 1958

Centennial History

The first Methodist church of Fairbury, Illinois, was formally organized in July, 1858 with 20 charter members: Dr. Lorenzo and Edith Beach; John Sr. and Rachel Kring; Catherine Kring; Mrs. Ann Delilah Kring; John Potter; Francis Moore; John Cumpston; Isaiah Conn and wife; Jacob Hunt and wife; A. J. Cropsey and wife; Randolph H. Maxwell and wife; Ivan Moore and wife; and R. G. Crouch.

Their first pastor was Reverend W. J. Stubbles who held the charge at the parent church of Avoca, a village five miles north, which was soon to die for lack of railroad facilities. Nevertheless, the Fairbury church remained an appointment and part of the Avoca Circuit until 1863, when it became a separate charge. During the Civil War it was served by both the Methodist Circuit North and the Methodist Circuit South, and in forty-six years it had no less than twenty-six pastors.

Between the calls of the Circuit Riders, the congregation was divided into neighborhood "classes" for convenience of meeting. Each had a leader who conducted regular worship services in the absence of the Pastor. John Kring, Sr., was the Class Leader at Fairbury.

As soon as the Fairbury Methodist Society was organized they began plans for the erection of a church. The Trustees—Francis Moore, A. J. Cropsey, Dr. Lorenzo Beach, John Cumpston, John Kring, Richard G. Crouch, Sara Busse, Isam Moore and Garrison Bowen—bought two lots, 5 and 6, block 30, for $50.00 from the owners of the town, Caleb L. Patton, Octave Chanute and Andrew J. Cropsey. A frame building, 32 x 55 feet and costing $1,600.00 was dedicated in November, 1858, by Reverend J. W. Flowers, Presiding Elder.

The rapid growth of their village made it necessary to enlarge the church the following year; but in ten more years, when their membership had reached 160, the building was completely outgrown.

The congregation now decided to build an entirely new church. This one was 45 x 75 feet, with a basement, and it was made of brick to resist the fires which continually harassed the settlers. They named it "The Fairbury Centennial Methodist Episcopal Church," and the cornerstone was laid October 10,

1876, by the Presiding Elder, Reverend R. G. Price, and the Pastor, Reverend R. B. Williams. The Board of Trustees were John Kring, Sr., Dr. Lorenzo Beach, W. K. Stafford, W. G. McDowell, O. P. McDowell, I. P. McDowell, James McDowell, S. G. Crull, and Wm. M. Dever.

Six months later a tornado demolished the church and seriously damaged the parsonage. So a new church, their third in twenty years, was built on the foundations of the ruined one. It was dedicated on January 20, 1878, by Reverend W. H. H. Adams, D.D., of Bloomington. It had a membership of 280, and 300 children were enrolled in the Sunday School.

In 1880 another sort of disaster befell the congregation. Judge Woodford McDowell kept the church records at his home, which caught fire and burned to the ground one night. All of the Methodist records were lost, but were afterwards supplied from the memories of the older members. This accounts for some of the discrepancies afterwards discovered.

In 1887 the women of the church organized a Pastor's Aid Society, later to become the Ladies' Aid, and raised the money to finish the church tower and provide a new organ. They were instrumental in having a basement excavated for a new furnace to replace the old heating stoves, and in substitution of the newly invented electric lights for the old kerosene lamps.

The most popular method of the ladies to raise money for the church was the Sociables held in the homes of the various members. At first these provided a much needed social life for the pioneer community, but, as other cultural interests developed, their original purpose was largely obliterated. Instead, each one became a contest of personal prestige and popularity, and correspondingly irksome. Finally, in 1905, a Conference of Laity of Central Illinois Methodist Episcopal Conference adopted resolutions denouncing church Sociables for revenue in favor of "good plain tithing."

They rid themselves of an extremely haphazard way of raising money for their church, but Fairbury found itself with another problem: when the social life was taken from the homes, it naturally tended to center in the church, and their facilities were completely inadequate for the new requirements. Decidedly, they needed another church.

A Building Committee was appointed with Reverend J. A. Johnson as chairman. The members were Reverend E. S. Wil-

son, Logan Kring, John Will McDowell, Will Bane and Dr. G. C. Lewis.

In September, 1902, they began work to raise the necessary money; five months later they were able to let the contract. March 6 the Farewell Service for the old church was held, consisting chiefly of the reminiscences of the older members. The next day the wrecking crew began their work.

The parsonage was moved to the site of the old church, and the foundations of the new church were laid where the parsonage had been, at the corner of Fourth and Maple Streets.

The cornerstone was laid April 15th.

On November 15, 1903, the church was ready for Dedication.

It was a Victorian variety of Tudor design, 64 x 98 feet, of red pressed brick and Bedford stone, with stained glass memorial windows, twin towers and a slate roof. It cost $21,000.00, a sum oversubscribed by a thousand dollars.

For the Day of Dedication the new church was beautifully decorated with flowers, ferns and potted plants furnished by Kring Brothers, Logan and Ed, who continued to provide the Methodists with flowers every Sunday for over forty years.

The address at the morning service was given by Joseph W. Powell, Grand Organizer of the Brotherhood of St. Paul, and the Presiding Elder, J. F. Robinson, D.D. In the afternoon Reverend Doctor Barnes, of the Grand Prairie Seminary, made the principal address. There were more services in the evening.

The next evening, Monday, the new kitchen was put to use with a supper for the friends and members of the church and their families. At this time, Mrs. L. B. Dominy surprised the Ladies Aid by presenting them with five large, new sets of china dishes, sufficient for the largest of their crowds, and each dish bore the monogram of the church, “M. E. C.”

After the supper, the Official Board held a meeting to attempt to express something of the affection and appreciation the entire congregation felt for their pastor. Not only had he inspired them all with his leadership, but he had personally raised the greater part of the building fund without their assistance, and he had supervised the many details of the actual construction.

The congregation had already provided a memorial window for him, the great east window in the sanctuary, “The Good

Shepherd," depicting Christ with his hands raised in blessing. Now the Board, with truly grateful hearts, voted to raise his salary, return the money he had donated to the church fund, and granted him a vacation to be taken whenever he desired.

The members of the official board were: Reverend E. S. Wilson, I. H. Shover, C. W. Neitz, E. W. Mahoney, J. G. Francis, T. S. O. McDowell, W. L. Kring, A. D. Westervelt, C. E. Patmore, Reverend H. C. Hart, Ira O. McCullough, Geo. Day, W. J. Bethard, Samuel Dancey, E. N. Kring, T. F. Payne, Dr. G. C. Lewis, E. E. Meharry, Reverend A. S. Magan, David Sharp, J. W. McDowell, C. L. Perlee, J. P. Shearer, Dr. H. A. Pressler, A. M. Martin, U. S. Swarm, Jesse Baily. Dr. Johnson was the chairman.

The Methodists thought their building would be sufficient for many years; yet, no later than 1909, when the graded Sunday School lessons were begun, and the children had to be classified by age, they found themselves in need of more class rooms.

While these were being built, the Ladies Aid remodeled the kitchen and basement, and changed the treacherous circular stairway to a straight one with a landing. They had the gas pipe railings with the old rose curtains removed from the sanctuary balcony and choir loft, and new matching woodwork installed. The old leaky faucet and iron bowl in the front vestibule were replaced by a sanitary drinking fountain. The towers were lowered, and the roof repaired. A bulletin board was stationed on the lawn, and the weekly church bulletin started. The crowning accomplishment of all, however, was the new $2,000.00 pipe organ. This was dedicated in November, 1909.

With this remodeling, the work of the Sunday School became more vigorous than ever, although it had always been emphasized from the very beginning of the church. The 1887 schedule of services listed the preaching at 10:30 a. m. and 7:30 p. m., and a Class Meeting (a recital of personal religious experiences) at 12 m.; but Sunday afternoon, from 2:30 on, was reserved for the Sunday School.

Smith Olney, one of the public school teachers, became their Superintendent about 1880, and he served in that capacity for nearly twenty years. Under his watchful eye, their concerts and programs were presented to packed audiences.

In summer there were Sunday school picnics. Each child carried his own dinner and was taken by a hay rack to nearby woods to enjoy swings, croquet and free lemonade.

In Winter the Christmas entertainments were outstanding community events.

A Children's Choir supplemented the regular one, whose members served so faithfully. Gertrude Henderson sang in the latter for forty-eight years; Charles Steinberg for fifty, and he is still a member; and Logan Kring for fifty-two years until his eyesight failed not long before his death.

Both the Women's Foreign and Home Missionary Societies had organizations for the various age groups of children, and there was intense rivalry among them.

The Epworth League enlisted the teen-agers who held self-conducted worship services every Sunday evening before the regular preaching service. A Junior Epworth League for the younger children met on Sunday afternoons. Both maintained a regular schedule of parties.

The church sponsored an annual Old Folks Dinner; lectures which covered a great variety of subjects; organ recitals, and concerts by visiting musicians. It also supported the local presentation of the Redpath Chautauqua.

The Sunday school had a lively orchestra, and a baseball team which played in the local church league. They made the County team in 1923.

Father and Son, and Mother and Daughter Banquets became annual events.

Through the years the following individuals who were members of this church in their youth served in Christian Service work: Fern Carter, Goldanna Cook, Elizabeth Fuessley, Nellie Goshorn, Edith Mitten, Walter Thompson and Walter Teesdale.

The year 1940 marked the beginning of a new era for the entire Methodist Episcopal Church. In the interests of efficiency and new strength, many of the church organizations were combined. All of the various groups of women united to form the Women's Society of Christian Service. A similar group of young women is called the Wesleyana Circle. The men are a chartered organization known as the Methodist Men; and the high school crowd forms the Methodist Youth Fellowship. There are four choirs of children, and the Wesleyana Singers in addition to the regular Chancel Choir.

The streamlining was so successful the Sunday School was soon again in desperate need of more space. A group of the

younger men finished excavating the basement to make a large room, and an upstairs balcony was remodeled to provide more class rooms. This, however, was the limit of all possible expansion within the original building, and it was pitifully insufficient.

Moreover, there was still another problem: the church building had been in constant, heavy use for 50 years without major repairs. The worn-out heating system threatened instant and total collapse. The antiquated electrical wiring was downright dangerous. The roof leaked. The walls of the sanctuary were dirty, streaked and cracked. The pipe organ was beyond use. And there were other things.

It was right at this time, 1955, that Reverend William C. Jones was sent to Fairbury. With his leadership, the Trustees met and discussed the need of remodeling, repairing and redecorating the church, and they considered the provision of more educational facilities. A Centennial Program of Modernization was established, and a Building and Planning Committee was appointed. James Goold was chairman. The members were Mrs. E. F. Dickey, Stanley Weeks, Keith Anderson, John Wagenseller, Clifford Denker, Logan Wilson and Si Moser.

This committee studied the various things needing to be done, and got contractors' estimates for them.

When the Trustees had received this information, the Development Fund Committee was chosen: Carlos Thompson and Keith Anderson are Co-Chairmen; Clifford Denker, Roscoe Combes, Roy Taylor, James Harrison, James Goold, Robert Maurer and Robert Monroe.

Now for some time the Official Board had become increasingly convinced that the old system of raising funds by church suppers and occasional solicitation was completely inadequate and outmoded. They felt an urgent need to conduct the monetary affairs of the church on a business-like basis, with a budget which would allow for a plan of maintenance and yearly repairs covered by the pledges of every family in the membership.

The Committee began their fund raising campaign in November, 1956, with a church-wide Loyalty Dinner held in the High School gymnasium after church. At its conclusion various speakers outlined the needs of the church, laying the foundation for the coming drive for pledges.

When the money was at hand, first needs were met first, and the church building was given a thorough renovating. It was torn up for months.

The “gingerbread” was removed from the towers, part of the roof was replaced and the eaves were repaired. The brick walls received spot tuck-pointing. New entrance doors were installed; and the windows were tightened. All electric wiring was replaced and new light fixtures were put in. The pipe organ was completely overhauled and a new console relocated.

When the church building repairs had been completed, the Board of Trustees recommended the construction of a Fellowship Building. The congregation approved their recommendation and plans, and authorized them to begin construction in December, 1957. Keith Anderson, Chairman; Charles Holforty, Robert Maurer and Si Moser were named to the Building Committee. Earl Thomas, of Lexington, Illinois, was awarded the contract. Numerous men of the church contributed many hundreds of hours of voluntary manual labor during the construction period.

The Committee consulted with architects and served as their own contractors, planning a red brick building with lines to harmonize with the original structure. For the front windows they used the stained glass removed from the church where the walls were joined.

The men of the congregation helped with the construction work, and each week the Building Committee met for breakfast to plan the week’s work for their crew. Under the drive of their leadership, the building was finished, furnished, and ready for use on April 13, 1958.

The Fellowship Building contains the Pastor’s study, a fine modern kitchen, rest rooms, and a large room 36 x 72 feet. This latter has folding doors for subdivision. The total cost of this Centennial Development Program was $73,000.00

Our church membership, after the revision of the rolls, is now 593. Five hundred and five children and adults belong to our Sunday School, with an average attendance of 275; and there are 53 babies on the Cradle Roll.

The addition of the Fellowship Building to our church facilities has enabled us to expand our educational and fellowship programs, and to provide also a place for many community

activities. We believe this to be in accordance with the intent and purpose of our Founding Fathers.

Seven members are left to us of those who belonged to the church at the turn of the century.

Cora Evans joined membership June 26, 1892; Mrs. Ralph Deputy, August, 1893; Mrs. Frank Haner, February, 1898; Mrs. Jessie Love, January, 1899; Mrs. W. C. Drennen, 1900; Mrs. Chas. Steinberg, July 15, 1900; Mrs. Edith Mitten, July 15, 1900.

Living Couples: Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Gordon, September 15, 1905; Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe Combes, Roscoe, 1902, Eva, 1906; Mr. and Mrs. Debold Householder, 1907; Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Steinberg, Charles, 1902, Lucretia, 1900.

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PASTORS OF THE FAIRBURY METHODIST CHURCH

1857-1868: W. J. Stubbles, W. A. Presson, B. P. Wheet, E. H. Penfield, J. Grundy, S. B. Baker, J. G. Evans, J. E. Rutledge and S. G. Havermale.

1869-1877: W. C. Knapp, William Watson, R. G. Pearce, W. P. Graves, R. B. Williams, John Wilkinson.

1878-1888: M. F. Havermale, B. W. Baker, E. S. Wilson, J. W. Haney, R. Crewes, W. McPheeters, G. R. Palmer, R. B. W. Williams

1889-1906: Ed Wasmuth, L. F. Cullom, E. S. Wilson, M. A. Head, J. A. Johnson.

1907-1916: M. V. Crumbaker, A. Wirt Lowther, Gideon L. Powell, J. A. Chapman.

1917-1935: George H. Thorpe, D. F. Wilson, John V. Kennedy, M. V. Van Lear, Virgil Thompson.

1936-1955: R. E. Buford, M. L. O'Harra, L. R. Tagg, C. L. Shult (died in June, 1949), Cecil Lockard.

1955-: William C. Jones.

OFFICIAL BOARD — 1958-59

Trustees—

Carlos Thompson, President of Trustees
Raymond Mishler, Chairman of Official Board
Robert Maurer, Treasurer of Board
Everett Sutter, Financial Secretary

E. F. Dickey
Charles Holforty
Raymond Householder
Silas Moser
Guy Moore

Stewards—

A. Keith Anderson
Elias Aupperle
Carroll Besgrove
Mrs. Bert Davis
Mrs. E. F. Dickey
James Goold — Vice Chairman
Walter Henning
Mrs. Elmer L. Baily — Recording Steward
Ross Mowery
Mrs. Silas Moser
George Myers

Wayne Newnam
Donald Steidinger
Mrs. Donald Steidinger
James Steidinger
Hiram Steidinger
Charles Scherr
Meryl Vansickle
Stanley Weeks
Logan Wilson
P. M. Hotaling
Edward Schmidt
Mrs. Richard Stevens

Commission Chairmen—

Chairman of Evangelism and Membership — William Chilton
Chairman of Education — Mrs. Richard Stevens
Chairman of Missions — Mrs. Elmer L. Baily
Chairman of Stewardship and Finance — Donald Steidinger
Church Lay Leader — Clifford Denker
Church Lay Member to Conference — John Wagenseller
Reserve Lay Member — James Goold

Woman's Society of Christian Service—

Mrs. Walter Henning — President
Mrs. E. M. Gerdes — Vice-President
Mrs. Charles W. Veatch, Jr. — Secretary
Mrs. Harry Klopfenstein — Treasurer
Mrs. C. J. Hadaway — Promotion Secretary

Methodist Men—

Wayne Newnam — President
Raymond Householder — Vice President
Edgar Runyon — Secretary
Harold Vansickle — Treasurer

Chairman Commission of Education — Mrs. Richard Stevens
Church School Superintendent — George S. Myers

Adult Dept. Superintendent — Miss Dorothy Rudd

Teachers:
Marimates — Members of class are teachers
Christian Builders — Charles Veatch, Clifford Denker
Hopewell Class — Mrs. Harry Newnam
Optimist Class — Mrs. Alma James
Men's Class — John Wagenseller

Youth Dept. Superintendent — Wynn Deputy

Teachers:
Freshmen — Mrs. Elmer Streib
Sophomores — Mrs. William Jones
Juniors and Seniors — Leroy Fagot, William Chilton

Intermediate Department —

Teachers:
7th Grade — Mrs. Charles Holforty
8th Grade — Mrs. Logan Wilson

Junior Dept. Superintendent — Mrs. Robert Maurer

Teachers:
4th Grade — Mrs. Kenneth Holt, Lloyd Woodward
Mrs. E. M. Gerdes, Asst. Teacher

5th Grade — Mrs. Richard Atteberry, Mrs. Wayne Hish
Mrs. Olen Bounds, Asst. Teacher

6th Grade — Mrs. Carlos Thompson, Dr. Logan Wilson

Primary Dept. Superintendent — Mrs. Harvey Day

Teachers:
1st Grade — Mrs. F. H. Miller, Mrs. Gene Hines
2nd Grade — Mrs. Maurice Sutter, Mrs. Lyle Ricketts
3rd Grade — Mrs. Edgar Runyon, Mrs. Clifford Atkins

Kindergarten Dept. Superintendent — Mrs. Ira Kilgus

Teachers:
4 and 5 yr. old children — Mrs. Charles Scherr, Mrs. Wynn Deputy, Mrs. John Maple, Jr., Mrs. Raymond Householder

Nursery — Mrs. James Steidinger, Mrs. John Mowery, Mrs. Elmer Aupperle

Helpers in Nursery — Mrs. Keith Coleman, Mrs. John Zimmermann

Mrs. A. Keith Anderson, in charge of music in children's departments.

Methodist Youth Fellowship—

Marshall Kaisner — President
Jane Moore — Vice-President
Janet Schlipf — Secretary
Jo Ellen Maurer — Treasurer
Rev. Wm. C. Jones — Counselor

Courtesy of
RECORD PRINTING
Fairbury, Illinois

TRANSCRIPTION NOTE:

I scanned in the cover and all 16 pages and created JPG files for each page. I then used ChatGPT AI program to transcribe each page into text for me. I then had ChatGPT do an over-all error check and make sure I made no transcription errors.

In a separate upload to Archive.Org, I uploaded all the JPG files for each page.

Dale C. Maley
Fairbury IL Historian
May 2, 2026